

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05

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O R 211200Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3333

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO, SP, UN

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA; SAHARA ROUNDUP

REF: A. MADRID 7220; B. MADRID 7221

SUMMARY: COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HELD SPECIAL MEETING OCT 20
ON SAHARAN ISSUE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL ALSO MET.
SPANISH LEGIONAIRE KILLED AND THREE WOUNDED BY LANDMINES
AND REPORTS FROM EL AIUUN INDICATE MINE FIELDS EXIST ON BOTH
SIDES OF FRONTIER. ALGERIAN-BACKED F POLISARIO INDEPENDENCE
FRONT SAYS IT WILL DEFEND SAHARA FROM MOROCCAN AGGRESSION.
BOTH F POLISARIO AND SPANISH-SUPPORTED PUNS SAY THAT COUNTER-
MARCH OF SAHARANS TO MOROCCAN/SAHARAN BORDER HAS ALREADY STARTED.
MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR HAS SEEN BOTH PRIME MINISTER AND FONMIN
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AND PUBLICLY INDICATED THAT DIALOGUE BETWEEN SPAIN AND

MOROCCO COULD LEAD TO SUSPENSION OF PLANNED MOROCCAN
MARCH. END SUMMARY

1. SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OCT 20
DISCUSSED SAHARA'S DECOLONIZATION AND IMPACT OF "EVENTUAL
DECISION OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL". MFA HAD PREVIOUSLY
RELEASED STATEMENT THAT SPAIN WOULD DECOLONIZE SAHARA UNDER
UN AUSPICES. THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL, WHICH MEETS ON
MONTHLY BASIS, ALSO MET EARLY OCT 20 WITH MINISTER OF
PRESIDENCY, WHICH CONTROLS DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SAHARA,
AND FONMIN, WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS, IN ATTENDANCE.

2. ON MILITARY FRONT, ONE SPANISH LEGIONNAIRE WAS KILLED
AND THREE OTHERS WOUNDED WHEN THREE-VEHICLE PATROL REPORTEDLY
TRIGGERED LANDMINES IN THE AREA NEAR TIMBOSCAI. A SPANISH
OFFICER WAS WOUNDED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WHEN HIS JEEP STRUCK
A LANDMINE. NEWSPAPER AND TV REPORTS FROM EL AIUUN SAY
THAT SAHARAN FRONTIER WITH MOROCCO IS COVERED WITH MINE-
FIELDS LAID ON BOTH SIDES BY MOROCCAN REGULAR AND IRREGULAR
FORCES SUPPLEMENTED BY ADDITIONAL MINEFIELDS LAID BY
SPANISH FORCES ALONG NATURAL ROUTES OF ENTRY. THE MINE-
FIELDS AND CONFUSION ABOUT THEIR LOCATION COULD
COMPLICATE HASSAN'S MARCH.

3. NEWSMEN IN EL AIUUN HAVE FILED REPORTS THAT SAHARANS
THEMSELVES (LED BY ALGERIAN-BACKED F POLISARIO) HAVE PLANNED
COUNTER-MARCH; SOME ELEMENTS ARE REPORTEDLY ALREADY ON
THEIR WAY TO MOROCCAN BORDER. F PLISARIO INDEPENDENCE
FRONT SOURCES IN ALGIERS AND EL AIUUN HAVE TOLD CORRES-
PONDENTS THAT IT WILL DEFEND SAHARA AGAINST MOROCCAN
INVASION. IT REPORTEDLY HAS 700 ARMED MEN PREPARED TO
MOVE TOWARDS FRONTIER. (ALTHOUGH UNCONFIRMED, THERE WAS
REPORTEDLY A CLASH OCT 13 BETWEEN MOROCCAN FORCES AND F
POLISARIO MEMBERS.) LEADER OF ERSTWHILE SPANISH-BACKED
SAHARAN NATIONAL UNITY PARTY (PUNS) CLAIMS HE HAS 16,000
MEN READY TO MARCH TOWARDS FRONTIER AND EXPRESSED HOPE
THAT THEY COULD BE ARMED. WE TEND TO DISCOUNT THE PUNS,
BUT BELIEVE THE F POLISARIO HAS THE CAPABILITY TO CAUSE
THE MOROCCAN MARCHERS SERIOUS TROUBLES.

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4. SPANIARDS AND MOROCCANS STILL GIVE EVIDENCE OF SEEKING
A DIALOGUE. MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR EL FILALI HAS SEEN BOTH
PRIME MINISTER ARIAS AND FONMIN CORTINA IN PAST FOUR DAS;
A PLANE WITH MOROCCAN ROYAL HOUSEHOLD MARKINGS LEFT MADRID
LATE OCT 20 WITH A SINGLE PASSENGER, POSSIBLY EL FILALI.
LATTER TOLD PRESS REPS AND THEN SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED IT THAT
GOS/GOM DIALOGUE COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO SUSPENSION OF
MARCH.

5. A NEW COMPLICATING FACTOR IN GOS/GOM RELATIONS COULD
ARISE IN SPANISH AFRICAN PRESIDIOS OF CEUTA AND MELILLA.
GOS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED BORDER CROSSINGS OCT 20 FOR NEARLY
AN HOUR BETWEEN CEUTA AND FINIDEQ BECAUSE 5,000 MOROCCAN
MARCHERS REPORTEDLY BROKE OFF AND HEADED TOWARDS BORDER.
GOS RESPONDED BY REINFORCING CEUTA'S BORDER PERIMETER.
WE ASSUME THIS WAS AN INDELICATE REMINDER BY MOROCCO
THAT THE FATE OF THE PRESIDIOS IS LINKED TO THE OUTCOME
IN THE SAHARA.
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